

Commonly Believed Myths About Breastfeeding and the Fact

Myth

Fact

"I tried breastfeeding, but I didn't have enough milk."

Milk supply can be increased. The supply of milk is determined by how often the baby is put to the breast, how long the baby suckles the breast, and how effectively the baby moves milk from the breast.

"I can't stand pain. Every time I breastfeed, it hurts so much that I cry."

Good positioning and latch-on, along with frequent feeding, will eliminate most pain. If the pain continues, refer the mom to a breastfeeding counselor or lactation consultant.

"I have to stop breastfeeding or the baby will get the awful flu I have."

Continued breastfeeding protects the baby. Breastmilk contains antibodies which protect the baby from the mother's illness. If a breastfed baby gets sick, the illness will be less severe than if the baby had not been breastfed.

"My boyfriend doesn't want his friends to see my breast, so I guess I can't breastfeed."

Loose blouses and a baby blanket help a mother breastfeed without showing her breasts. Or, a mom can breastfeed in the privacy of her room or in her car. Or, she can choose to pump her milk and feed her baby expressed breastmilk if friends are around.

"My breasts are too small. I can't make enough milk."

Milk supply is determined by the frequency of breastfeeding. Breast size only indicates the amount of fat in the breasts, not the ability to produce milk.

"I eat spicy chili and Tabasco sauce every day. Those foods will go through my milk and make the baby sick."

Most women can eat their normal diets. Women from Mexico and India eat very spicy food, and they successfully breastfeed.

"I can't stop smoking, so I can't breastfeed"

Nicotine does go into the breastmilk. However, the advantages of breastfeeding outweigh the risk of nicotine in the breastmilk if the mother is smoking fewer than 20 cigarettes a day. The risks increase with more than 20 cigarettes a day so the mother should be encouraged to cut down as much as possible.

"Breastfeeding ties you down. I need my freedom."

It is easy to pump and store breastmilk. A mom can leave her baby for an evening or even return to school or work. Breastmilk

“If I get upset or angry, my milk will spoil and the baby will get sick. My mother said it happened to her.”

“I never eat breakfast, I don’t eat good enough to make breastmilk.”

“I’m having a C-section, so I won’t be able to breastfeed.”

“Twins! I can’t possibly feed both babies”

“Formula is just as good as breastmilk.”

is always available. There is no running to the store for formula.

Emotions may temporarily suppress the let-down process a little, but many moms have nursed successfully through wars and other stressful events.

The quality of breastmilk remains good even if the diet is not perfect. Women in other countries have very poor diets yet they breastfeed successfully for two to three years.

Women who have had a Caesarean birth can breastfeed their babies. There are ways of positioning the mother and baby so both are comfortable during the feeding.

Women can successfully breastfeed twins and even triplets. There is information about positioning and scheduling that is helpful, and many cities have support groups for parents of multiples.

Breastmilk is made for human babies. It protects babies from infections and allergies. Formula is made from cow’s milk or soy milk. It contains no immunological properties. It contains only the nutrients that scientists have been able to identify in breastmilk and replicate. A container of formula never changes, but breastmilk changes constantly to meet the baby’s needs.